

## Media Interview Tips

### Keys to a Good Interview

- **Keep answers short and to the point.** Avoid one word answers however as reporters need quotes and answering only “no” can make it appear you are hiding something.
- **Think about what you want to say before you speak.** Anticipate the reporter’s questions, especially the hard ones. What are your key messages?
- **Don’t use too much cycling jargon.** Use examples and tell anecdotes that illustrate your point.
- **Speak in complete thoughts.** The reporter’s question may be edited out and your response should stand on its own. This is especially important for television and radio interviews.
- **You are never off the record.** Never say anything you do not want to read in print, hear on the radio or see on television or the internet.
- **Be confident - you are the expert.** Most of the time, a reporter will accept your answer if it’s given with the conviction of authority.

### Preparing Before the Interview

- **Know the "party line" regarding controversial questions;** AKA collaborate and communicate with others in your organization! All people in your organization who are likely to be contacted by a reporter **must** give essentially the same answer. Disagreement will give the reporter just the controversy he’s may be seeking.
- **Have your “talking points” (or key messages you want to express in the interview) ready.** Prepare a single communication objective and two or three secondary points you want to make. (ie. 13th Annual NRC: 1.Largest overall prize purse ever 2. Number of women’s races increased 25%)
- **Have supporting info:** Beforehand gather facts and figures to support your points, if needed.

### During the Interview

- **State the most important information first** – then provide the background.
- **Make eye contact** with the reporter.
- **Don’t repeat negative questions in a response.** If you do they may be attributed to you.
- **Don’t inappropriately joke.** Be friendly, but not complacent. Assume everything you say, even in a social situation, may appear in print or on the air.
- **Do correct inaccuracies.** If the reporter’s info was received in error, point it out.
- Do remember that it is a common practice for reporters, for their own reference, to record all conversations conducted over a telephone.
- **Again-Be brief.** Answer difficult questions as briefly as possible, then bridge to your message.
- **Use examples and share reasoning/logic.** Reporters always need perspective (i.e., We did this in 05 and it worked out like this, so in effort to improve we’re now doing this.; Due to overwhelming response.... ; This is part of a national trend.; This worked on the road, so now we’re going to implement it on the track side.).